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Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving Encourages Safe Family Travel during the Thanksgiving Holiday

(Indianapolis, IN.) November 9, 2006 – The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving and the Traffic Safety division of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) announced Thursday that a statewide enforcement crackdown will go into effect on Saturday, November 11, and continue through Saturday, November 25.

The enforcement crackdown will be supported through an existing partnership between the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving and local and state law enforcement agencies. Participating agencies will place additional officers on the streets who will work overtime to enforce Indiana's impaired driving and seat belt laws over the Thanksgiving holiday season.

"Unfortunately the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's is one of the deadliest and most dangerous times of the year. We plan to leverage the burst of holiday excitement by boosting awareness and compliance as it relates to seat belt usage and driving under the influence. The goal of these enforcement activities is to strongly urge Hoosiers to make smart and safe decisions," said Mike Cunegin, executive director of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute.

According to reports submitted from local agencies to ICJI in 2005, Indiana had approximately 700 people killed in highway crashes resulting from their failure to use safety restraints or involving an impaired driver with an illegal (.08) blood alcohol concentration.

"We will be out in force conducting sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols and using undercover officers to get drunk drivers off the road," said Indiana State Police Superintendent Paul Whitesell. "We want everyone to play it safe and always designate a sober driver or find alternate transportation."

This enforcement crackdown will coincide with a statewide media campaign scheduled from November 8 – November 22. The primary messages promoted in this campaign will be “*Click It or Ticket,*” and “*Drunk Driving. Over The Limit. Under Arrest.*”

Research has shown that when combined, high visibility enforcement and a strong media message lead to higher seat belt usage rates and a reduction in alcohol-related crash fatalities. The statewide (radio and television) media campaign will especially target the worst areas in rural southern & northern Indiana where a higher amount of people are killed (respectively) in accidents that drive unrestrained and/or impaired.

“Driving irresponsibly is simply not worth the risk. Violators will be spending their money on tickets, bail, court, lawyers and towing fees instead of spending their time with loved ones. So don’t take the chance. Buckle up, don’t drink and drive and follow the posted speed limits,” said Ryan Klitzsch, Traffic Safety division director.

The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving serves as the public opinion catalyst and the implementing body for statewide action to reduce death and injury on Indiana roadways. The Council provides grant funding, training, coordination and ongoing support to state and local traffic safety advocates.